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REASONS FOR CHURCH CREED.

A CONTRIBUTION  
TO PRESENT DAY CONTROVERSIES.

BY  
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AUTHOR OF "DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION," ETC.

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## P R E F A C E.

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I N the following pages I have attempted to set forth in a way understandable of the people a defense, not of Church confessions, but of the idea of Church creed. In the first part it may seem to the critic that the difference between dogmatics and creed is not sufficiently marked; but he who carefully studies the whole subject will justify the method of argument, for he will see that the difference between the facts of objective religion and creed is not greater than the distinction between creed and confession of faith. The evidences of religion are Reasons for Creed. It may also be objected to that I have not sufficiently enlarged upon certain points. But I have not intended to compass the whole argument of any point; condensation, and not elaboration, being the thing desired, since this little work is written not so much for technical scholars as for the people in general. I did intend to add a few sections on the Criteria of Faith, but on further reflection have decided to publish a separate work on

that subject, lest this work should become too large. For this same reason multitudinous notes and references which, while they are delightful to the student, are distracting to the general reader, have been omitted. But should any one desire to pursue the subject farther, the following works may be referred to: Swainson's *Hulsean Lectures*, 1857; Baumgarten's *Necessitas lib. Symbolic*; Chastel, *de' Usage des Conf. de fois*; Neislingius, *de Usu Symbolorum*; S. Bates, *Creeds and Confessions Defended*; J. Carlisle, *Use and Abuse of Creeds*; Meyer, *de Utilit. et Hist. Symb. Ecclesiæ*; Pressly on *Church Fellowship*.

Hoping that this work will be, as one of the ripest scholars among us thought it would be, "of value to the Church," I send it forth upon its mission.

R. J. C.



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# REASONS FOR CHURCH CREED.

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## GENERAL REMARKS.

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IF one were asked, What is the most formidable opponent of modern Christianity? he would probably mention before all else, "Modern thought," and, as included therein, materialism, idealism, evolutionism, and rationalism. Such an answer would be only approximately correct. Indifferentism has a better-grounded claim to that bad eminence than any of the phases of modern unbelief. That infidelity which boldly and coarsely denies the existence of a personal God and related truths is not the enemy which does the most harm. The worst infidel is the man who says he believes in God and in Christ, and then lives as if there were neither. It would be much nearer the truth, because including more, to say that, in the nineteenth century the deadliest foe of Christianity is civilization.

By civilization we do not mean that form of human

development which is but another term for Christianity itself in its social aspect; that civilization which is a constant protest against a revival of Babylonianism, which seeks to subordinate the physical to the spiritual; which would make of literature and art and science strong angels of ministry to man's highest and holiest needs, and by a hearty application of the Christ-doctrine of the brotherhood of man, and a development of rational reverence for law and authority, would knit society with bands of everlasting strength. We mean that civilization—for there are two of them, as there have ever been—which is but an apotheosis of the flesh; a refined paganism, atheistic in the head and superstitious in the heart. The chief glory of such a civilization is material splendor. Whatever contributes to that is esteemed a benefaction to the race. Wealth and luxury and a barbaric freedom are the ends in view; for, although men boast that intellect rules, yet the intellect must be in the stomach, since every-where there is evidence of the supremacy of the flesh as opposed to the spirit. God may be upon the mountain, but the golden calf is in the valley, and we worship that. Else what shall we say of the materialistic tendency of educated thought; the luxury of the rich and the grinding poverty of the poor; the loss of ideals which sweeten life and make it purposeful; the gross realism of literature; the insatiable thirst for the car-

nally great with the rotting of social beliefs and virtues which largely characterize the false civilization of anti-Christian society? It is easier by far to convert a tribe, or even a whole nation, of naked savages to the humanizing spirit of Jesus, as in the case of the Sandwich Islands, than it is to thoroughly Christianize the centers of carnal power, as New York or London or Paris or Berlin, with all their churches and cathedrals and ministers and mission boards and Bible societies and other ecclesiastical arrangements.\* "Everywhere," says an observant writer, "I note the practical triumph of that earth-to-earth philosophy which will see nothing beyond experience, which shuts off the approval of science to all that cannot be weighed and measured. Every-where literature and art are losing themselves in the most vulgar sensuousness. Look throughout Europe, and what, in every country, are the great majority of the educated classes who give tone to the rest? Skeptics in religion, doubters in ethics, respecting nothing but accomplished facts and palpable force, with nerves more sensitive than their hearts, seeking to season the platitude of existence by a more or less voluptuous estheticism."†

And so it is that, as in the early days of Christianity, when it, as the only power which could minister to the

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\* See *Bib. Sacra.*, April, 1884, for the literature on the subject.

† *The Fortnightly Review*, January, 1887.

“long, slow agony” of worn-out nations, was opposed by a civilization which was characterized by immense wealth and abject poverty; which smiled at the gods, but fed the sacred chickens; which wove chaplets of flowers for gorgeous feasts and yet was consumed by an unutterable sadness, even so now the enemy of religion is that civilization which has all the skepticism and sensuousness of the Roman without a sufficiency of its refinement to save it from contempt.

It is not strange that such an age should be fruitful in oppositions to revealed truth, and that these should be of an extreme type. Every position has been attacked—the Mosaic record, inspiration, miracles, the genuineness of the gospels, and even the character of the Lord Jesus. Every attack, however, has demonstrated the impregnable strength of the Church. But the conflict is not ended. Defeated in the attack upon sacred Scripture the battle is now against the doctrines of Scripture and the declarations of faith in the symbolic books of the Christian Church. It is a significant fact that at a time like the present, when every school of thought and scientific association boldly announces the results of its study, the same right should be denied the Church, and that the necessity for announcing Christian dogma should be so stoutly resisted not only by the opponents of religion, but even by some professing believers.

It is to this particular phase of modern dissent, the assault on Church creeds, that attention is here called in the hope of showing that there are solid reasons why there should be creeds, and that on this subject, as in all other questions in religion, the Church invites the most painstaking study. We do not ask that formulated beliefs be accepted on the plea of antiquity or on the authority of renowned theologians, fathers or church councils. It is impossible to believe contrary to reason; and if one *should* succeed in successfully deceiving himself it is difficult to understand how God, who gave man his reason, could be pleased with one who should stultify it in this manner. "For my part, I am certain that God hath given us our reason to discern between truth and falsehood; and he that makes not this use of it, but believes things he knows not why, I say it is by chance that he believes the truth, and not by choice; and I cannot but fear that God will not accept of this sacrifice of fools."\* The true believer will insist that impartial criticism be applied to every dogma declared binding on the conscience as well as to those theories and hypotheses in philosophy and physics which demand the assent of the intellect. Critical testings of religion whenever possible are not to be deplored. Dry leaves and withered branches only will be swept by the storm, but the trees

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\* Chillingworth's *Religion of Protestants*, p. 133.

of the Lord which are full of sap, the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted—these will remain. Faith in a living God, heart trust in Jesus of Nazareth as the world's Redeemer, a yearning after eternal verities which lie beyond the utmost rim of human vision—these will survive the shocks of revolutions, the chaotic confusions of transition periods of human thought, and will finally prove more attractive to the souls of men than the glitter of mammon. There may be times of depression; sore times of mental alienation from God; periods when there shall arise in the soul a sort of resentment against the universe, when hope comes and goes, and self awakes to terrible possibilities of woe; but the fever will go down, the prodigal age will come to itself, and, like Goethe's Faust listening to the bells of Easter-morn, will sigh for the time when

Prayer was the ecstasy of bliss.

"To the Bible," says Matthew Arnold, "will men return, because they cannot do without it; because happiness is our being's end and aim, and happiness belongs to righteousness, and righteousness is revealed in the Bible."

Criticism serves to separate the true from the false, the essential from the non-essential. It also builds. It was the relentless criticism of pagan worship and belief by the early Christians which compelled the



priest and the philosopher to abandon a religion which could neither minister to the conscience nor command the respect of sober reason. The great controversies which shook all Christendom, such as the Arian, the Eutychian, the Sabellian, and the Monophysite, served at last but to bring into bolder relief the things which were believed from the beginning. The polemics of the Reformation find their justification in our own day. The various attacks of the English deists in the last century called forth the famous *Analogy* which drew even from John Stuart Mill the candid admission that "the Christian religion is open to no objection, either moral or intellectual, which does not apply at least equally to the common theory of deism." What a vast literature concerning the life and work of the Christ has grown up around us since West's *Treatise on the Resurrection of Our Lord* (1747), and Sherlock's *Trial of the Witnesses* (1774)! Since then the rationalists of every school in England and on the Continent have exhausted their learning in futile efforts to invalidate the gospel record, to destroy the credibility of miracles, to relegate the life of Jesus to the region of myths, or to mar its uniqueness with the rhetoric of sentimentalism.

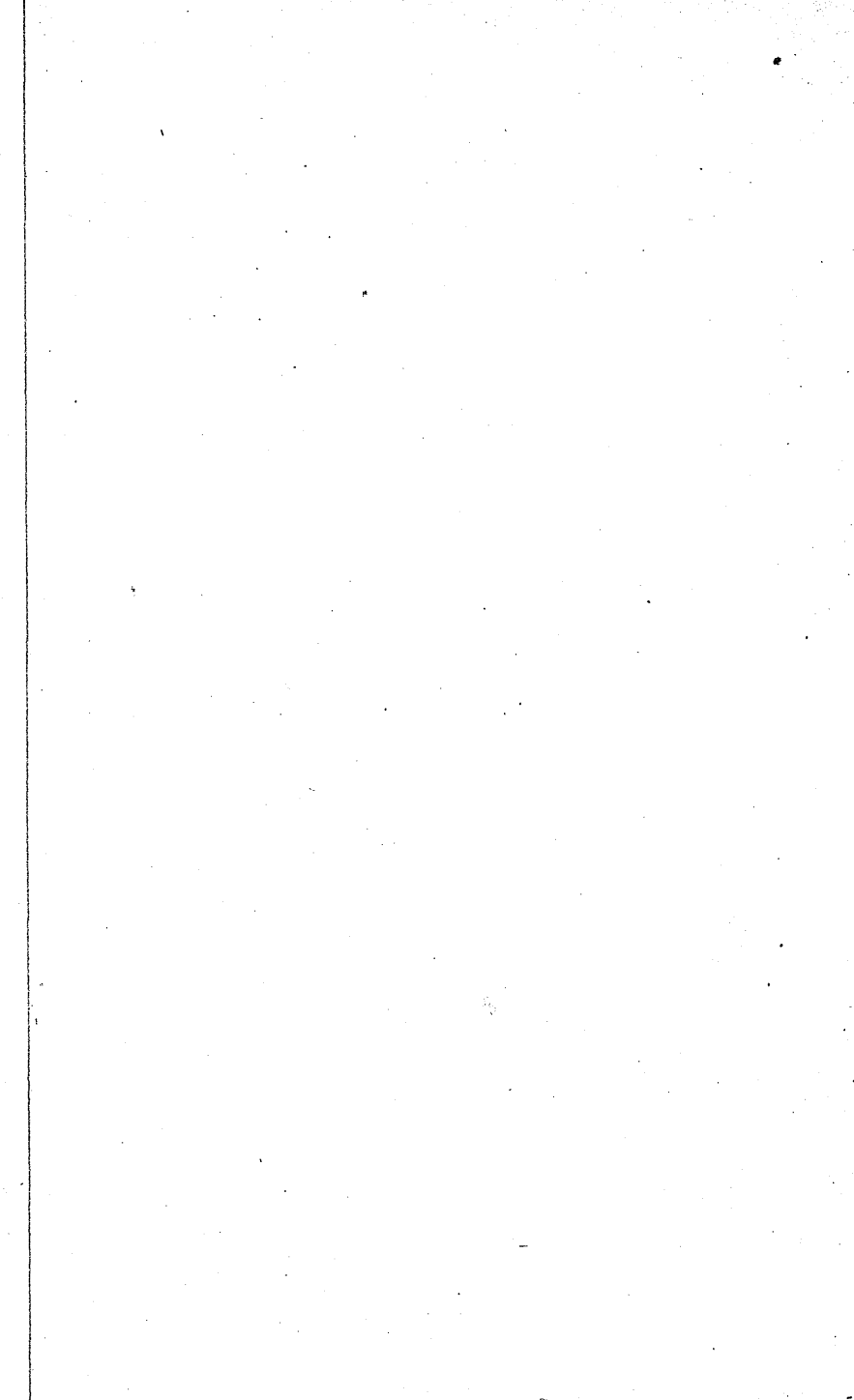
But the theories have had their day. The dreamings of Renan and the less romantic but more effective attempts of Schenkel and Strauss have all vanished

like the *genii* in an Eastern tale, before the strong light of sober criticism. And now that the smoke has cleared away we see the historic Christ of the Gospels as never before, and know that we have *not* followed cunningly-devised fables.

# PART FIRST.



## OBJECTIONS



## OBJECTIONS.

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CHRISTIAN creeds are rejected (1) by the agnostic because he rejects the fundamental truth underlying all religion. (2.) By those who recognize no scientific certitude as to church doctrine. (3.) By deistical thinkers who deny the divinity of Christian teaching. (4.) By a class of semi-Christian thinkers who seek to destroy all distinctive dogmas of revelation ; and finally, not to mention any more, by those who regard formulated doctrine as the fallible product of fallible interpreters, and will have no creed but the Bible.

SECTION ONE.

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THE first class mentioned rejects formulated belief for the same reason which leads him to reject all revealed truth ; a denial of a living, personal God, who comes into relationship with his creation. The sentiments of the agnostic have been emphasized with such dogmatic positiveness by leaders of materialistic thought that, were one to accept their statements without inquiry, he would think them to be in possession of the secrets of the universe. The idea of God, we are told, is a growth from fetish worship, and there is no way thinkable by which we can ascertain the correctness of our thought. That there is a God or something may be true ; that there is any evidence of such a being is not true. Nature has in herself an adequate cause for all things visible. For, according to the well-known theory of evolution, all organic beings originated in and have been developed from one common stock, through the continuous operation of the laws of natural selection, without any intervention or influence of an overruling God. Hence he is unnecessary.

It is not needful to our present purpose to take part

in this controversy. Evolution—that is to say, the theistic conception of it—may be the theory of creation; some eminent Christian scientists assure us that it is, or that at least it is not inconsistent with the most orthodox theology. But that is not the particular question just here. We simply protest against forcing upon us as a scientific truth a dogma which, after all that has been said upon it for a whole generation of thinkers, still remains a contested hypothesis. Even Rome, which is regarded as the embodiment of spiritual tyranny, would hesitate to define a dogma which had been so slightly canvassed, or had met with the opposition which the materialists' dogma of evolution has encountered among Christian scientists. If freedom of thought and liberty of the press, if the abasement of ecclesiasticism through the ascendancy of science, has only resulted in a change of masters for the human intellect, it can no longer be said that we have been benefited by the change. For though the superstitions of religion may have clouded the reason they left undimmed the hope of a better life; but the negations of science not only destroy the inspirations of the present, they also chill with their icy breath the thought of the future. It makes but little difference by whom the inquisition is worked; what we want is that it shall not be worked at all.

Further; the agnostic may smile at the credulity of

those who believe the creeds of the Church, but what dogma of the Church commands belief upon such slender grounds as does the faith of the materialist? Those who reject creed, because based on the idea of a creator, seem utterly oblivious to their own credulity. They fail to comprehend the magnitude of the demand they make upon the common sense of mankind when they ask us to believe that this vast universe—that even this globe of ours, a sand-grain among the immensities, with its myriad forms of life, insects, birds, fishes, animals, and man; its flowers, grasses, and trees, with all their tints and gentle bravery of color; its wonderful adaptations of means to ends so immeasurably transcending the best efforts of human genius; its enchanting beauty of mountain, hill and dale, and prodigality of splendor in the sky—was evolved without a God, by blind force, from infinitesimal molecules of dead matter! To the man who has this faith nothing shall be impossible. Such a one believing the least will really believe the most. He can sacrifice his reason on the altar of any fetish; rejecting an omnipotent God he can deify chemical force; and while descanting on the powers of nature which can do such wonderful things make man lament that he has life and mind, since he finds himself surpassed at every step by forces of matter which have neither one nor the other.



As the first Napoleon once said, "Some men can believe every thing but the Bible," and it is not an uncommon thing to find men who, while scornfully rejecting the miracles of the Bible, become fervent believers in spirit-rapping and table-turning. History is not without many pointed illustrations of the fact that when one abandons himself to crime in defiance of conscience, or in the windy pride of his heart drifts out upon an unknown sea of reckless speculation, he becomes either an Ishmael in politics and religion or the victim of drivelling superstition.

Louis XI., says Farrar, shrank from no crime, yet he revered a little leaden image which he carried in his cap. Philippe Egalité could not condescend to believe in a God, but he could conjure with coffee-grounds to discover the future. Lord Herbert could not admit the possibility of proof in a matter of revelation, yet, naturally enough, he sought, and actually believed that he had received, for the publication of his book *De Veritate* a sign from heaven. In all this there is nothing surprising. Long since Shakespeare discerned the fact :

"For when we in our viciousness grow hard,  
O misery on't, the wise gods seal our eyes ;  
In our own filth drop our clear judgments, make us  
Adore our errors, laugh at us while we strut  
To our confusion."

## SECTION TWO.

THE second class referred to reject the notion of creed because, as they say, religion is grounded in feeling, and is therefore unverifiable. What is wanted is certainty ; but nothing can be certain that is not verifiable. "The man of science," says Professor Huxley, "has learned to believe in justification not by faith, but by verification." Again, "A belief is void of justification unless its subject matter lies within the boundaries of possible knowledge, and unless its evidence satisfies the condition which experience imposes as a guarantee of credulity."\*

If this canon of the eminent scientist means that nothing is worthy of credence but what can be demonstrated it is evidently self-destructive, for the canon itself cannot be demonstrated. We do not look for demonstration in the practical affairs of life, for there are many things which we believe on testimony ; nor would demonstration make our faith stronger. We cannot have demonstration in many sciences, some of them the most important, as psychology and polit-

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\* Huxley, *on Hume*, p. 48.

ical economy. Life, with its multiplex influences, events and moods, will not surrender to the crucible or blow-pipe of the chemist. If, on the other hand, the canon means that that only which is reasonable and is in conformity with the rational laws of evidence shall be admitted within the boundaries of possible knowledge, then there can be no longer any objection to religion or to creed on such a plea, since religion is not unreasonable, but, on the contrary, demands the highest exercise of the rational faculties. What religion specially seeks is the true, for the true is always reasonable, but the reasonable is not always true. It is true that a certain event happened ; it may be astonishing ; it may even awaken doubt, but since it *did* happen it is reasonable whether we can account for it or not. On the other hand, it is reasonable—that is, not opposed to reason—that a certain animal is in the zoological garden, but as a matter of fact it is not there. That it is there is reasonable, but that it is there is not true. Science, in seeking the true, first seeks the reasonable ; and what is reasonable becomes a working hypothesis or theory. But there may be other theories equally rational of the same fact, and then it may be, as it has often been, that while all these theories were reasonable none of them were true. A Newton is born, and for the first time we think we have the truth. What has just been said of physical science may also

be said of philosophy, which, like "Penelope, is forever weaving and unraveling the same web." "The theologian," says Martensen, "confesses himself to be in so far a realist that he thinks not for the sake of thinking, but for the sake of the *truth*; he confesses, to use Lessing's pertinent simile, that the divine revelation holds the same relation to his investigations as does the answer of an arithmetical problem, given at the outset, to the problem itself. Dogmatics, therefore, does not make *doubt* its starting-point, as philosophy is often required to do; it is not developed out of the void of skepticism, but out of the fullness of faith."

Schleiermacher made the feeling the seat of individual religion, and since his day, as in the early days of Christianity, the truth has been emphasized by the Church. But what is this feeling? It is not emotion, an evanescent influence passing over the soul like a shadow over a field. It is, as Martensen defines it, in the sense of Schleiermacher, "a term denoting the most immediate contact of consciousness and its object." There can be no surer knowledge than this. What one is conscious of he knows. Certain facts he must ascertain by rational methods; but religion itself, the God-consciousness, comes through the heart—through faith, which is the highest exercise of reason.

Has science any surer ground or better methods? The molecular measurements of Sir William Thomson

are accepted by physicists the world over; yet Professor Tyndall tells us that they are "an exercise of the imagination." He tells us, further, that "the kingdom of science cometh not by observation and experiment alone, but is completed by fixing its roots in a region inaccessible to both, and in dealing with which we have to fall back upon the picturing power of the mind." This is almost identical with what Pascal says of religion.\* Again, Mr. Lewes regards atoms as belonging "wholly to the realm of thought, and not to reality." Herbert Spencer affirms that "atoms and ether, though valuable as working hypotheses, are inconceivable." And all that Professor Tyndall can say is that "the existence of this ether is demanded by the scientific imagination."

Still further. Every one knows how uncertain is the teaching of science concerning the date when life began on this globe. Some say 6,000,000 years were sufficient for its development and distribution. Professor Dana figures on 48,000,000 years as the lowest number since the beginning of the Silurian deposit in Wales. Others yet take 100,000,000 years as representative of geologic time, and there are still others who ask for thousands of millions. We might humbly ask, in view of all these facts, Where is the

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\* "Nous connaissons la vérité non seulement par la raison, mais encore par le cœur." *Pens.* II, 108.

boasted certainty of science, and in what degree does it excel religion?

But it is not to physical science only that uncertainty belongs. When we enter the domain of philosophy, what systems of thought, what battles concerning existence, the certainty of knowledge, etc., are called to mind by the mention of such names as Des Cartes, Locke, Kant, Hegel, and a host of others. And as in philosophy so also in the most practical science of political economy, what contests are revived by the names of Say, Malthus, Smith, Ricardo, Mills and McCulloch. Is this bread-and-butter science of political economy a mental or a physical study? If mental, is it a science or an art? or shall it be treated wholly as a science of government?

These examples—and many others can be cited—are not presented for the purpose of discrediting the efforts of conscientious thinkers, but for the simple object of showing, without argument, that uncertainty does not belong wholly to religious subjects. The range of the human faculties, though stretching toward immensity, is limited. The human judgment is fallible. The mists of uncertainty hang over every department of human inquiry.

But to the skeptic who rejects the notion of a creed—because he thinks its contents are unverifiable it can

be shown that the cardinal facts of faith are just as certain as the established facts of science. How does the scientist reach his conclusions? By experiment, observation, and reasoning. Now it is by these methods precisely, with the addition of facts taken from human consciousness, that the Christian believer reaches his conclusions in the realm of religion. Does the scientist experiment? So do we; but, like the student of political economy, not with the blow-pipe and retorts of the laboratory. Each particular science has its own methods of experiment. The methods of agriculture cannot be employed in the science of astronomy. We arrive at a knowledge of God's will by doing it, for "*He that doeth the will of my Father shall know of the doctrine.*" Does the scientist observe all possible conditions and circumstances affecting the subject of inquiry? We also; and as he compares his data, and endeavors to ascertain the exact relations as to causes and effects, so the searcher after divine truth compares, as he must, spiritual things with spiritual things; the facts of human nature as he finds them with the corresponding statements of revelation; the prophecies of the Old Testament with the facts of the New; he will reverse his experiments when he can, and will apply all through his investigations the most rigid laws of evidence, until the whole is so presented by every method known to science that

conviction is the result. One step farther in the process of experiment, a complete surrender to the truth thus found, a fulfilling, as the scientist would say, of the necessary conditions, and his search is rewarded by possession ; he is enabled to *know* that he *has* the truth. The immediate contact of Him who is the Truth with the human consciousness does give a conviction which is absolutely final and irresistible. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." "He that believeth on the Son hath the witness." He *knows* that he has passed from death unto life, and no phenomenon in nature is more certain to him than this same fact of religion which has its roots in the human consciousness. Has science any thing surer than this? No.

But let us indicate the method by reasoning. It is constantly affirmed that science is based on fact and is therefore within the boundaries of possible knowledge. It can be just as easily shown that historical Christianity, objective religion, is also founded on fact. The life of Jesus of Nazareth is before us. It has been subjected to the acutest criticism of modern times, a period unequaled in the history of thought for intellectual acumen. Theories of various kinds have been tried to account for it ; the severe methods employed by historians have all been used by experts in the fields of biblical criticism ; but the life of Jesus is still before



us, and the verdict is that no facts in human history are better authenticated than the facts of Christ's life as recorded in the four Gospels. The Lord Christ is the colossal fact of history. Could we destroy the evidence supporting this fact no history could stand. The history of George Washington, of Napoleon and of Cæsar would be all of a piece with Sindbad the Sailor and the marvels of Baron Munchausen. But it cannot be destroyed. Christianity is a fact to-day. In the year 750 of Rome it was not, for it was not in existence; but in a hundred years from that date it had overrun nearly the whole Roman Empire. "We are but of yesterday," said Tertullian (A. D. 193) to the rulers of the empire, "and we have filled every place among you—cities, islands, fortresses, towns, market-places, the very camp, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum; we have left nothing to you but the temples of your gods."\* Justin Martyr (A. D. 114) wrote earlier: "There is not one single race of men, whether barbarians or Greeks or whatever they may be called, nomads, or vagrants, or herdsmen living in tents, among whom prayers and giving of thanks are not offered through the name of the crucified Jesus."† Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 182?) bears this testimony: "The word of our Teacher remained not in Judea alone, as philosophy did in Greece; but it was diffused

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\* *Apologeticus*, c. 37.

† *Dialogue with Trypho*, chap. xvii.

over the whole world." \* Similar testimony might be quoted from Origen and others, but a word from an enemy of Christianity will suffice. Tacitus in his *Annals*, (xv. 44) thus writes of the early Christians: "The author of this sect was Christus, who had been executed in the time of Tiberius by the Procurator Pontius Pilate. This pestilential superstition, checked for a while, broke out again, not only through Judea, the first seat of the evil, but even through Rome. First we arrested those who made no secret of their sect, and by this drew a vast multitude (*ingens multitudo*) of others also." (See also the *Letters of Pliny*, Epistle 91, and the *Life of Nero*, by Suetonius.)

How now, on truly scientific principles, shall this rapid spread of Christianity be accounted for? Was there any thing real at the bottom of it, or was this religion founded upon a mere myth, a legendary story? We will not now turn to other religions, as Brahminism or Mohammedanism, for similar examples of growth, for, in the first place, there is no comparison between Christianity and any other religion in the circumstances of their origin; and, in the second place, what we are aiming at is not so much the spread of Christianity, but the reason for it. Was Christ really what the Gospels say he was and what his disciples preached him, and what their immediate converts believed him to be, or

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\* See the whole passage in the *Stromata*, Book VI.

was he an ordinary man, afterward idealized and exalted into legend? Did his disciples falsify his character? Has Christianity a real Christ as a founder? Remember that those who turned their backs on the religion of their ancestors and the altars of their gods and embraced the new religion did so with the prospect of the cruelest death before them. Death by crucifixion, by decapitation, by the stake, by divers tortures in the arena, was ever before them as the reward of their boldness. They severed the bonds of family love; they endured ignominy and contempt, the fine scorn of the philosopher and the wit of the satirist; they became as the filth and offscouring of humanity; they became dead to the world, to its pleasures, its honors and its emoluments, and were only too glad to seal their faith with their blood. When to accept a certain belief is a matter of life or death, social ostracism, withering sarcasm and abuse, men do not readily accept silly fables. They do not through mere sport or obstinacy take every floating theory to their bosoms, and, enduring every malignant persecution, at last lay down their lives in defense of its truth. But these Christians met the contumely of the world and its conspiracy of hate with a calmness born of certainty, which neither the wisdom of the philosopher nor the scorn of the rabble, neither the pleasures of life nor the fear of death could overcome. This simple

people without power resisted all powers and drove idolatry from the face of the earth.\* How was this accomplished? By faith in a poetic myth? Whatever unthinking people may suppose, science demands that every effect shall have an adequate cause. When we apply this to Christianity, and seek its cause, history gives but one answer—Christ Jesus of Nazareth. He is the fact upon which Christianity rests. Religion, then, is not founded wholly on feeling, but, like a true science, may be verified by experiment, observation and reasoning.

Whatever methods science uses for ascertaining truth religion also uses, and can and does reach the same degree of certitude. If there is uncertainty in religion there is also uncertainty in science, for while the former may have its sects the latter has its schools. But as in science there is no controversy over facts, but only on the interpretation of them, so in religion there is no division over ground truths, but only in the understanding of them. What the earth and the starry heavens are to the scientist the Bible is to the believer. The facts are there; it is for us to find them and understand them. And as, in the progress of time, through the united labors of specialists there is brought about a better conception of the facts of nature, old views are exchanged for new ones, so in this respect

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\* Pascal, *Pens.* II. 319.

also religion keeps pace with her handmaid. "Men's thoughts widen with the process of the suns" and by the labors of thinkers, the development of Christian consciousness, and the events of the world's history, we reach new interpretations of old facts. As we climb the mountain we leave the mists behind us.

### SECTION THREE.

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THE third class mentioned are those who, while admitting the excellency of Christianity, deny its divinity, and therefore oppose the right of the Church to publish a creed. This class includes several schools of modern thought, including those referred to in the two previous sections.

Christianity is considered by such as a resultant of the moral and intellectual strugglings of the ages preceding its rise. It is, in other words, an evolution of the rabbinism of Jerusalem and the philosophy of Athens, aided by the Roman idea of universal dominion. The Lord Jesus was a Jewish rabbi with Gentile instincts, who finally fell a victim to sacerdotalism and the fierce ignorance of his time. They do not revile him, these rationalists; they patronize him. He is a great prophet, perhaps the greatest, but still to be named with Gautama, Confucius, and even with Mohammed.

It is hardly necessary to attempt a refutation of an objection to Christian creed based upon such unscholarly, uncritical grounds. The controversy between

Christ and other masters is closed. To open it again would be but to traverse once more the dreary wastes of comparative religions without any hope of reaching conclusions different from those already obtained. No human being ever impressed the world like Jesus. He wrote nothing, but committed his profoundest intuition to the immortality of a word. The simple words he spoke to the peasants of Galilee, or to the mixed multitudes that flocked to him from the cities of Judea, have entered into every language of man, and have become the only authoritative maxims of conduct among the most civilized nations. His words bring the same consolation, quicken the same hopes in the heart of him who dwells in the shadow of the Himalayas as in the heart of him who lives and labors in the great cities of Europe or America. He knew humanity, its profoundest needs, its troubles, and its medicine. Yet Jesus was not a reformer; he was not a statesman; he was not a philosopher. Jesus never reasoned. He laid down principles. He often illustrated. His conclusions are not the result of philosophic thinking; they are *the therefores of absolute knowledge*. He knew what was in man's heart. The words of weightiest wisdom seem as natural to him as the working of miracles. More; he is always greater than his word, as in the working of miracles he seems possessed of infinite reserve of power. Of no other can this be said. He

alone is the Unique. Jesus knew the truth, for he was the Truth. The truths which he uttered, unlike the words of any other teacher, have profoundly affected the political, social, and moral history of the world. If other world-teachers have spoken the same truths as Jesus why is it that his alone have changed the current of the world's thought, and, overcoming all barriers of climate, oceans, mountains, race, and religion, are rapidly becoming the universal faith? "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." They cannot be localized; they bear in themselves universality, and whatever they touch they quicken. The history of civilization is the history of the acceptance of his teachings into the thought and habitudes of the nations.

If we compare Christendom, even in its present imperfect condition, with other great divisions of the globe where the teachings of mere philosophers have prevailed, we shall be driven to ask, by the condition of things, for a rational cause for the difference. Wherever in the Orient we look society is steeped in superstition and rotten to the very core. It has been truly remarked that England's conquest of India was India's salvation from political anarchy and the foul social corruption which constantly increased, and which intellectual speculations on Brahina or Buddha, or profitless thinking on Nirwana, were as unable to re-



move as they were powerless to resist. Those who find satisfaction in degrading Christianity to the level of Oriental religions may be referred for practical illustrations of the benefit of these religions not only to India, but also to those motley nations dominated by Mohammedanism and to the teeming millions of China. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," says Jesus; "for men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs from thistles."

If Christianity is the result of intellectual development, how shall we explain the moral and social condition of Europe and America as compared with India, Turkey, China, and Japan? Have these nations had no development? If not, the question arises, Why not? If they have, why are they still in the elementary stages of every thing pertaining to progress, but have sounded the lowest depths of human wretchedness? And how shall we explain the progressive civilization of Christendom, the enthronement of woman, the value of the family, the worth of the individual, the civil liberty, and the upward tendency on lines conducive to social security and happiness? The civilizations of the East have not fallen into the dry-rot for the lack of intellectual vigor. The one fatal lack of the East was not intellectual power of the highest order, but spiritual power even of the lowest. As with an individual so with a nation. A power which is ever

greater than the man must constantly control him if he would be delivered from old habits. Any power or truth, spiritual or social, which is not on a higher plane than that in which he moves will always fail to exercise over him a dominating influence. This is an unchangeable law of nature. There is no spontaneous generation either in biology, sociology, or theology. The lower never rises into the sphere of the higher unless the higher, reaching down and imparting something of itself to the lower, lifts it into a higher realm. This elementary truth of science is so well known and clearly understood that it needs no illustration. But the history of more than one millennium has proved that the teachings of Jesus only are equal to the social uplift and continuance of a people. When these are wanting, though it were a nation of philosophers, social decay is simply a matter of time. Art will not redeem, nor will poetry prove stronger than philosophy. Literature never made a nation. Some of the most brilliant literary periods have been periods when corruption and luxury were eating out the heart of national existence. This will hold good even of the Restoration in England and of the reign of Louis XIV. in France. And if we turn from modern instances in England and France and Italy to antiquity, we will find there that Greece was most corrupt when most philosophic, and when her cities and temples were most adorned by the

genius of her sculptors. Monuments and columns and triumphal arches looked down upon Rome while she was seething in debauchery and dominated by fierce cruelty; and this, too, in an age when a Horace and a Virgil, a Tacitus and a Livy charmed the ear of the world with the harmony of their numbers and the magic of their style. The truth is, religion must underlie all social development. But a religion which is earth-born and earth-bound never can, in the nature of things, produce any thing better than itself. It is of the earth and tends dustward.

Christianity infused new blood into the peoples who accepted it. The candid historian cannot ignore the fact most clear that it was a new force both to the individual and the race, and that the civilization of the present, in its highest and best aspects, is the direct outcome of the teachings of Him who eighteen hundred years ago sat on the hill-sides of Galilee and gave hope to a world grown old in crime and savage in its despair.

The question that confronts us is, How shall we account for such a religion? Or, how shall we account for its Founder, the Lord Jesus? "Who say ye that I am?" is the challenge of Christ to the men of this age, as it was to the men of his age. Is he the world's Redeemer? Jean Paul Richter calls him "the purest of the mighty and the mightiest of the pure,

who, with his pierced hands, raised empires from their foundations, turned the stream of history from its old channels, and still continues to rule and guide the ages." De Wette, who is often quoted by rationalists, calls Jesus "the blameless and sinless one." D. F. Strauss, whose destructive work on the life of our Lord has been called an epoch-making book, speaks of Jesus as "the highest object we can possibly imagine with respect to religion; the Being without whose presence in the mind perfect piety is impossible." Renan, in addition to many compliments passed on Jesus in his *Vie de Jesu*, affirms in his *Etudes d' Hist. Rel.* 214, that "Jesus is King forever; . . . his beauty is eternal, his reign shall know no end." Even Theodore Parker says of him, "He pours out a doctrine as beautiful as the light, sublime as heaven, and as true as God. The philosophers, the poets, the rabbis—he rises above them all." A thick volume might be filled with similar testimonies from writers, English, German, and French, who, while they offer him a cordial of praise, thrust him through with the spear of their criticism. But how can Christ be all this if he is not divine? How can he who called himself "the Son of God," who thought it not robbery to make himself equal with God, who wrought miracles with such infinite ease while making these claims, who assumed the prerogative of the Eternal in forgiving sin—a prerogative

never assumed before by the holiest of men in the history of this earth—how, we say, can this Being be the Sinless One, the one object of adoration for all ages to come, the ideal exemplar of the race, the great, the good, and the holy, if he was not divine, if he was not what he claimed to be and what his followers declared him to be, “The Son of God?” Is the record true? Did the four evangelists invent this character, a character, as Channing said, wholly inexplicable on human principles? Rousseau has given an answer to that. Were the disciples imposed upon? If they were so ignorant as to be easily duped, and what they wrote was not true, how is it that their ignorance has been and still is mightier than the wisdom of earth’s mightiest philosophers, and that it has surpassed in its effects upon the world’s destiny the combined power of the world’s thinkers? Further; in a critical study of Christianity we must study its conflicts with Judaism, with the Roman Government, with the schools of a philosophic, polished heathenism; its survival of the dismemberment of the Roman Empire, its conquest of Teutonic nations; its conflicts with heresies within its own fold; its astonishing vitality to resist the influence of the shameful lives of many professing to be guided by its precepts—shameful enough to crush any religion that lacked a divine origin; its survival of the revolutions of thought following the revival of learn-

ing and its sublime triumph over all other religions which it fairly encounters in its march around the globe. Volumes would be necessary to tell the story of Christian conflict with world powers; it cannot be even outlined here; this is not the place, nor is it required. After all, argument does not make the Christian. All the evidences and apologies that professors and doctors might write from now till the crack of doom would be powerless to convert the heart, whatever they might do in convincing the head. The argument for religion is religion—that is, an actual experience of the grace of God. A holy life is unanswerable logic. Let the honest unbeliever who would be convinced look at those who are truly Christian, not at those who are merely baptized heathens, whose life is a travesty of the holy name of Jesus—believers in theory, infidels in practice; for such are not Christians any more than a Judas is a John. Look rather at those whose life is a song in the night and full of a divine sweetness; whose souls, while resting in the infinite peace of Jesus, are yet throbbing with a holy passion for humanity—men and women who, while toiling in life's dusty highways, like the thousands around them, subject to like sorrows, anxieties, and temptations, yet bravely endure, and not only wear "the white flower of a blameless life," as a moralist might, but become in themselves rousing inspira-

tions to duty and self-sacrifice—pillars of fire and clouds of smoke to all who wander in the wilderness of to-day. They may know nothing of the philosophy of the schools; they may know but little of the great world's history; but they know what sin is, and they know what redemption is; and that is the highest philosophy and the sum of all history. Let the honest skeptic look at these holy ones and account for *them* if he can. If one should think that these owe something to the moral influences of culture let him turn to the once lowest specimens of humanity and see what this religion has done for them. In the year 1832 Darwin, the celebrated naturalist, sailed round the world in the ship *Beagle*. He called at Terra del Fuego, in South America. His description of the people, as given in his diary, is horrible in the extreme; in the whole world he had not seen such people. They were savages of the most depraved type, terrible and bloodthirsty, with habits not to be described in human language. No one of the ship dare remain among them, and the great scientist Darwin turned away believing them to be wholly incapable of civilization. After a while a missionary faced the danger. He went among them with the Gospel of Jesus and remained with them, learned their wretched sounds, translated the gospel story of Christ's life for them, and taught them to read it. By

and by they began to understand it, and it melted their hearts and transformed their lives and civilized them. One may go among them now ; there is no danger. When Darwin knew of the marvelous change that had been wrought he, grand soul that he was, became a subscriber to missions through which the work had been done. What changed this savage people? Not philosophy, not rationalism, but the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ ; the love of God shed abroad in their hearts through the preaching of definite truth.



## SECTION FOUR.

OPPOSITION to a summary of Christian belief is made by others who, while not formally repudiating the whole of Christian teaching, desire, nevertheless, to so soften down its distinctive facts as to make them of no peculiar force in the world's thought and life. Music and art, and other refining influences possible in an age of culture, are to be considered as equally important as "fossilized dogmas." Man, it is assumed, only needs a liberal education to bring him into harmony with his environments. A due appreciation of himself will teach him his duty to society, and this is the most that morality or religion can justly demand. Now this may be a refined paganism, but it is not Christianity. Balaam may build altars and go through with his incantations, but what is primarily needed is not altars and flowers and criticisms on the latest book, but the message of the living God.

Others in this same class, but more Christian in their sentiment, will hear of nothing but religion, whatever that may mean in their crude and indefinite way of thinking. There must be no Theology, no Christology,

no Eschatology. Of these things we are supposed to know nothing certainly, and Christian Agnosticism becomes the best creed. Life, duty, conduct, and not doctrine, should be preached. Now this may be morality, but it is not Christianity. If the doctrines of religion are to be ignored instead of being made the foundation of life and duty, then the Epistles of Seneca, the Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius, and the ethical writings of other philosophers, may be placed on the same shelf with the Holy Scriptures—we are no longer Christians but moralists. Then, again, does it make no difference what one believes? Has belief no influence upon conduct? Did Voltaire's belief, Rousseau's, Paine's, Cæsar Borgia's, Wesley's, Xavier's, Jonathan Edwards's, have no connection with their conduct? To deny this is but saying that a man is no more responsible for his belief than he is for physiognomy, he being the victim of uncontrollable circumstances. But this is fatalism, and utterly destroys moral accountability, the last dogmatic utterance of the thorough-going materialist.

The misguided Church that rejoices in its deliverance from dogma and creed will inevitably discover that its existence in this world is by no means a necessity. Its services will be nothing but an emphasis of the individual called a minister, and its message to a world of sin and misery nothing but an idle whistle. Others in this class may object to creed because its accuracy

depends upon the fallible judgment of fallible theologians. It is true that the *expressions* employed to express the dogmatic idea depend on the framers of a creed, but the *dogma* is a matter of revelation, and if not accurately expressed, because, perhaps, not accurately understood, the growth of scriptural knowledge in the Church under the guidance of the Holy Ghost will nullify the inaccuracy. Then, the facts of science as presented to us depend upon the fallible judgment of scientists. And if to this one should reply that any competent person can verify these facts for himself, so also may any one verify the facts of the creed himself; for the word of God is the rule of faith, and to that must a true creed correspond. Again, the historic conception of the universal Church of any particular doctrine is much more likely to be correct than the opinion of a single individual. What has always and every-where and by all Christians been accepted as the correct teaching of Scripture ought not to be lightly esteemed by any one who, while denying infallibility to pope and councils, practically attributes that same infallibility to his own conception of biblical doctrine.

Finally, Christian summary of belief is rejected by many pious Christians who think that a creed supersedes the Scriptures, causes divisions in the Church, and is opposed to Christian liberty. To the first allegation this may be said—that no creed is ever placed even on

the same level with the word of God. The Bible is the standard, the creed is the Church's belief as to what that standard teaches. As to the second objection, it is a matter of history that Churches without creeds have been rent by doctrinal dissensions, as well as those that have had confessions of faith. And concerning the third reason, namely, that creeds limit Christian liberty, it must be frankly stated that the only business of a church is to bear witness to the truth as it understands it from God's holy word. The individual must accommodate himself to the truth, and not the truth to the individual. No man's liberty is infringed. If he cannot accept one form he is at liberty to go elsewhere in his search for what he thinks is the true form. Nor does a creed preclude progress in Christian thought. The doctrines of Scripture are settled, but progress in apprehending them in their fullness and in their relations to each other is a fact clear in the history of the Church from the beginning. Every argument, then, that militates against a creed as being opposed to progress is also an argument against a settled doctrine of Scripture.

Notwithstanding, there are those who will have no creed but the Bible. They emphasize this in such a manner that one would think all other Christians had neglected the Bible. But, like many other catch-words, this party cry will not bear analysis. Set forth God

to the people, we are exhorted. Good. But what *kind* of a God? The impersonal God of the Pantheist, or the inscrutable Power of the agnostic, or the Lord God of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures? What do we know about God, and what shall we teach the people concerning him? If we are afraid to put into succinct form, understandable of the people, what we have learned of God's nature and character, lest we be mistaken in our creed, why preach at all? Again, we are told to preach Christ. But here, again, the question arises, what *kind* of a Christ? Shall he be the Christ of Strauss, of Renan, of Theodore Parker, or the Christ of the Gospels? It must be evident to all that if we are to have a Christ we cannot avoid a Christology, some definite word about that Christ. An undefined Christ is no real Christ to the Christian mind; he is but an idea, or a mere sentiment. We might ask similar questions as to what this Bible is, involving the question of inspiration, and of many or all the doctrines taught in the Bible. Moreover, in the theological schools of a no-creed Church the doctrines of Scripture as understood by that Church, and the peculiar forms of Church government as accepted by that Church, are taught to young ministers who, in turn, teach these same things to the people, deluding themselves in the meantime with the notion that their Church has no creed. The position is untenable. To

assume that a Church has no creed because it has no published belief, while that Church at the same time preaches a creed peculiar to itself, is extremely illogical. No Church in Christendom has in its creed all that it believes and teaches. The great truths of our holy religion which have been controverted, or those truths which may serve to indicate the true from the false, alone are published that the world in the midst of doubt might know the body of truth held by the Church and the cardinal facts around which her teaching moves. A Church without a creed is a government without a constitution.

## PART SECOND.

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REASONS FOR CHURCH CREED.





# REASONS FOR CHURCH CREED.

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## SECTION ONE.

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IN passing from the negative to the positive side of this subject it will not be necessary to prove a simple proposition of this nature, namely, that in the constitution of the Church there lies an inherent necessity for formulated beliefs. Every organization, moral, political, or scientific, has some ultimate object in view as a reason for its existence. This object rests upon certain beliefs, principles, or opinions, and when these cease to exist, or to be no longer worth contending for, the society loses its reasons for further organized effort. If this statement be accepted it will be seen that the Church has a right to declare her belief, and also to demand of every one seeking admission to her fold an honest acceptance, as far as he is able, of those principles for the promulgation of which she was called into existence.

The Church is not a social club ; not a coterie ; not a scientific association ; not an institution for the development of religious estheticism. The Church is the visi-

ble, living organ of divine truth in the world. To her have been committed the oracles of God. It is her office to interpret the word to the salvation of the impenitent and the edification of believers. The apostle Paul condemned teaching any thing contrary to "the doctrine which is according to godliness"—that is, the true religion; and he exhorts Timothy to keep that which was committed to his trust. In the second epistle to Timothy the apostle writes, "And the things which thou hast heard from me among (via, *through*) many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able (*competent*) to teach others also" (chap. 2, v. 2). In the same epistle (chap. 1) he exhorts Timothy not to be ashamed of "the testimony of our Lord," but to "hold fast the form (the pattern, *outline*) of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing (*trust, deposit*) which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." Finally he exhorts him, "I charge thee in the sight of God and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word (the *doctrine*), reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine." In the Epistle to Titus one of the qualifications of a bishop, or presbyter, is that he hold fast

the faithful word (that is, the word or *doctrine* of faith) as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers." This is the same as the instructions to Timothy, showing a settled purpose and method on the part of the apostle. Nor was this peculiar to him. Peter, in his first general epistle, says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." In the second general epistle he speaks of a "more sure word of prophecy," and then immediately passes to the opposers of it, "False prophets among you who shall bring in damnable heresies."

We cannot read these stern admonitions, and many more like them, and deny that the first Christians possessed any regular form of doctrine. Nor will it suffice to say that by "sound words," "that good thing," and similar expressions, the "Gospel" is meant. To take refuge in that one word is to stick one's head in the sand. The word Gospel contains in itself the doctrines of Christ and his apostles. These doctrines are the Gospel. When the apostles preached the Gospel they preached certain facts, certain great and fundamental truths, and these are the sound words, the sure word of prophecy, and the good thing committed to faithful men for the instruction of others. The line between the true and the false, between that which was committed to the Churches in the person of their min-

isters, and that which the unknowing and unstable did wrest out of the oral and epistolary teachings of the apostles, was most clearly marked. The messengers of St. Paul, who carried his letters to the various Churches, found no variant creeds. The apostolic instructions to Timothy and Titus were the same, and the purpose must have been uniformity of faith and practice. There was one Lord, one faith, one baptism. And this oneness of essential faith continued even after the apostles had passed away, so that Tertullian could say to his opponent, "Run through the apostolic churches in which the very seats in which the apostles sat are now filled; where their authentic epistles are read, conveying the sound of their voices and the representation of their person. Is Achaia near you? You have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedonia you have Philippi; you have the Thessalonians. If you can pass over to Asia you have Ephesus; but if you are near Italy you have Rome." So it is, the Church held certain great truths which were committed to her, and any deviation from them was immediately recognized as "another gospel;" and thus it was that Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, A. D. 177, in writing to Florinus, who had embraced strange doctrines, could say, "These doctrines were never delivered to thee by the presbyters before us, those who also were the immediate disciples of the apostles."

It is not necessary to hazard the statement that the apostolic Church arranged these principal truths in articulated form, as was afterward done by church councils. Not till the Council of Nice, A. D. 325, was there a creed universally accepted without variation. But at no time from the days of the apostles was the Church without a formula of faith. The formula varied slightly in the different principal churches, as those of Jerusalem, Cesarea, Antioch, Alexandria, etc., but the substance in all was the same. Besides these we have the confessions of faith of the earliest fathers, some of these reaching back to the days of the apostles; and the agreement in the principal doctrines confessed is strong proof that such doctrines, such summaries of faith, composed the body of truth held by the immediate converts of the apostles. This is not equivalent to saying that the apostles formulated a creed. Principal Tulloch thinks such an opinion (that they did) questionable, if not destructive to the apostolic origin of the New Testament epistles. Nevertheless it must not be supposed that the primitive Christians had no distinctive heads of doctrine, which we are inclined to think were practically articles of faith. The apostle Paul speaks of the "doctrine of Christ . . . of the doctrines of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection from the dead, and of eternal judgments." It cannot be denied that the baptismal formula was a

creed. Then, again, there was a standard of divine truth from which the Galatians were foolishly bewitched; there was a doctrine held by the Church at Ephesus, when Timothy remained there that he "might charge some that they preach no other doctrine;" there was a difference between the standard of faith of the Church and the *opinions* of Hymeneas and Alexander; there was something to be preserved when the apostle commanded that "a man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject;" and, finally, there was a reason for Jude to write in his general epistle, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." The Church is the custodian of a faith, which faith, considered as a general term, comprises many particular facts or doctrines which are articles of creed. These facts do not lie in systematic order in the sacred volume—from the fact that it is not a treatise on systematic divinity, but an unarranged repository of truth. But the Church must arrange, or rather bring into clear view, the great essential truths contained in the volume if it would have, as God wills it to have, a clear conception of the whole revealed will and purposes of God, and if it would accomplish its mission in teaching the nations.

## SECTION TWO.

**T**HE Church is not only the depository of the faith, she is also a teaching body. She is the only divinely designated and commissioned teacher of revelation in the world. The State has no authority to teach, nor can it in any form assume the office of religious teacher without usurping the authority of the Church. The commission of the Church is found in the words of her Founder at his ascension: "And Jesus came and spake unto them (the disciples), saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach (disciple) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii, 18-20.) Having received the faith the impulse of that faith is to proclaim itself, to extend blessing and peace to all men. The function of the Church, then, is to teach men the way of life, to lead the nations from gross darkness and from under the dominion of Satan into the light of God, and into fellowship with the Father through his Son Jesus Christ.

Now if the Church teaches she must have something to teach; and if this teaching is to be of any value it must be definite. There can be no teaching if that which is to be taught is indefinite. All glib talk about preaching "the Bible" is positively offensive in its hollowness unless we mean something particular, something definite about that Bible. An abstract Bible is no Bible at all. It is a mere sound, and signifies nothing. If the doctrine of God's being and attributes is indefinite, if nothing particular and positive can be affirmed of it, then nothing can be taught respecting that dogma; and so of all other dogmas.

It is evident, then, that, like all other teaching bodies in this respect, the Church must give *form* to the truths committed to her care. But if she gives form to her teaching it becomes formulated or dogmatic truth, the heads of which constitute her belief or creed. To criticise the Church for having dogmatic creed is in reality a condemnation of the commission given to her by her divine Lord. It is to condemn the dogmatic preaching of the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, and the no less dogmatic teaching of Paul in all his epistles and in his proclamation of the Christian belief on Mars' Hill.

The Church, professing to be a scriptural, apostolic Church cannot be other than dogmatic. The Christian doctrine is a doctrine not of theories and hypotheses,



not of human opinions or judgments drawn from the moral history of the race, but of facts and absolute truths which admit of no doubt and do not appeal primarily to reason, but to faith. "*The words which thou gavest me I have given them,*" said our Lord, speaking of the revelation which he had from the Father. If one should ask that these words stand or fall by the judgment of a human tribunal the question arises, What kind of a tribunal and of what age of the world shall this tribunal be? We would not be content to have savages compose that court, nor would we want any other than this age to be the period. But the twentieth century might object to our age and to our selection of judges, and succeeding ages might object to the conclusions of the twentieth century. The idea is absurd. M. Renan, in his *Life of Jesus*, fell headlong into this yawning pit. "Miracles," he wrote, "are not performed in the places where they ought to be. One single miracle performed in Paris before competent judges would forever settle so many doubts!" Who would be competent judges? The French Academy, with all its professors of physiology and physics? This would be perhaps the most competent body; but this same competent company once resisted vaccination; also the use of quinine; they also decided against the existence of meteorolites, against the use of lightning-rods, and, like the famous En-

glish scientist, Lardner, declared against the steam-engine.

The dogmas of the Church, not the interpretation of them, cannot stand or fall at the bar of human reason. They are revelations from God, and can neither be changed nor added to, for the revelation is complete. If the Scriptures teach the incarnation of the Only Begotten, the Church cannot reduce the doctrine to a mere *inhabitation* of the human Jesus by the Logos; if the holy word teaches reconciliation through the atonement, or final rewards and punishments, the Church must present such doctrines, though exact words, such as, for instance, God-man, trinity, etc., are not found in the sacred text. The Church must be necessarily dogmatic in this, for she cannot go to the world without definite truth, as did that typical agnostic, Ahimaaz, who outran the courier but had nothing to tell the anxiously-waiting king. A disappointed world would say, as David said to the swift-footed know-nothing, "Turn aside and stand still!" Her dogma is her message, and with this she has conquered and does conquer. It was the great dogmatist, Paul, the slave of Jesus Christ, who turned the Gentiles from the service of idols unto the living God; and it has only been through the genuine practical teaching of dogmatic truth that the Church has ever gained a lasting victory. Kings and emperors and great ones of

earth aided her when she had become a power, but it is to the plain preaching of divine truth as expressed in her formularies and believed in by her ministers, and not to intellectual prowess, nor to philosophical wisdom, nor to the patronage of the great, nor to general indefiniteness, incoherency and confusion of teaching, that Christianity owes her victories over the nations. She affirms that the Scriptures contain the doctrines which she teaches as matters of faith—the fatherhood of God; the divinity of the Lord Jesus; the atonement through Christ for the sins of the whole world; the depravity of human nature; regeneration by the Holy Ghost; blessedness for the penitent; anguish and woe for the finally impenitent. To deny or ignore any one of them is to destroy the contents of the Gospel. If we deny the divinity of Christ we destroy at the same time the efficacy of the atonement. Instead of being a sacrifice for the sins of the world it becomes an example of holy martyrdom; not a shedding of blood for the remission of sins, but a lesson of loyalty, perhaps, to the truth and obedience to civil authority. For if not divine, then Christ is a dependent creature, and can no more reconcile us by his death to the God of justice than could Peter, James or John. Again, deny the depravity of the heart, and not only is the necessity of the atonement doubtful, but also the fact of the new birth. And further, deny

the doctrine of the Trinity, and the doctrine of the new birth falls with it; for if there is no Trinity there is no Holy Ghost, and so no Regenerator and Sanctifier of all who repent and believe. Every doctrine is a keystone in the arch of truth; pull one out and the whole arch falls. Should the Church in a spasm of admiration for, or rather of surrender to, the spirit of modern speculation go before the world saying in a compromising manner, "There have been many notable characters in history eminent for virtue and intellectual ability who doubted these truths," "It is possible for men to be sincere in their antagonism to these doctrines and yet be saved," what possible reason could she give for impressing these doctrines on the souls of the millions who are *not* eminent for virtue and intellectual ability? Should the Church prove recreant to "the faith once delivered to the saints" and say to a world seething in sin and woe, "It is not certain what Christ was; not certain that he rose from the dead; not certain that there is a Holy Ghost who regenerates the hearts of men; not certain that there is an irreversible judgment for all who reject the Christ"—in one word, that the whole system of teaching of the Old and New Testaments is probably uncertain—and what possible reason could she give for her existence? On what plea could she build churches, make calls for millions of money or go through the

farce of sending missionaries to the heathen? Does the certainty of the doctrines of Christianity depend upon who occupies a professor's chair in a German university?

It was not a doubtful message that Paul carried to Athens or to Corinth or to Ephesus or to imperial Rome. He did not simply tell the philosophers at Athens or the Christians at Rome they must be pious and humane, good singers and cultivators of esthetic worship. The mighty dogmatic facts of human sinfulness and of man's need of an Almighty Saviour, and of the necessity of the power of God's Spirit in changing human character, making the individual meet for adoption into the family of God, were the facts which he preached and with which he filled his epistles. It was not a doubtful message that converted the great Germanic nations of Europe, and in modern times has turned savage tribes and barbarous peoples to the true and living God.

Finally, in sustaining its position as a teaching body, the Church protects herself from all inroads of heresy. Its ministers are scattered throughout the globe; they differ in talents, in breadth of culture, in knowledge of divine things, and minister to congregations as varied as humanity. Shall these ministers teach the same things, or shall each one, irrespective of his ability, constitute himself an authority in matters pertain-

ing to the eternal welfare of his people and the peace of society? If each one should be allowed to formulate doctrines of his own devising, having a Bible proof for them, as he would suppose (every heresy in the Church grounding itself in Scripture), it is clear that soon the "faith once delivered" would be submerged under individual opinions. The conflict of notions would end in a chaos of religion not to be distinguished from that rationalism which borders on the crudest deism. But a church that has a standard of belief reflecting the teachings of God's word knows that its ministers teach the same thing, and the people are not distracted by clashing doctrines. Should a minister presume to teach contrary to the doctrines of such a church while occupying its pulpit, the people would know that he was acting in bad faith; that he was subverting the peace of his people; and would be in a position to protect themselves from his individualism. Thus does the Church preserve itself while obeying the command of its Lord to teach all nations, teaching them to observe all things which to it have been delivered.

SECTION THREE.

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IN considering the necessity for formulated belief in the Church we cannot ignore the relation of creed to life. Such an idea may seem strange just at this time, when it is the fashion to assume that creed is a thing of the past and that religion consists in mere enthusiasm or ecstatic enjoyment. But religion does not mean emotion. It means obedience to the truth. Joy in the Lord is the blessed privilege of the believer, but it must have its ground in loyalty of life to the commandments of the God of all comfort. To remain willfully ignorant of the facts of revelation, to care little or nothing for these facts in their bearing on Christian life and character, is to reduce religion to a question of cold, passionless morality, or else to one of mere emotion. The former is not Christianity. The latter opens the flood-gates to all kinds of vagaries in religion, impressions, visions, and revelations. In nearly every community, perhaps, Churches have been, at some time in their history, distracted, and in many instances torn asunder by people who, giving their imagination unbridled license, become a law unto

themselves, reject all authority of Church in matters of discipline, means of grace, etc., and think themselves superior to the ordinary ministry of the word. The end of such is often painful; for, having cut loose from all moorings, they drift out into the shoreless without compass or chart except their own feelings and idiosyncrasies, and are finally wrecked in their belief or settle down in the quicksands of indifferentism.

Another evil resulting from a separation of belief or creed—in the wide sense in which we have been using it—from life is the free and easy attitude which it is liable to cultivate in unsettled members toward their Church and all Churches. Not bound by any principle of belief to any Church they become a prey, rather a feather blown about by every wind of doctrine. Having been taught no settled principles they wander from Church to Church and subsist on what for the time may be pleasant to “itching ears;” or, like the Arab who remains in one place till the grass is eaten up, they settle for the time being where they may receive the most social attention or reap the benefits of trade. Such people will pervert the growing sentiment of fraternity among Christians and interpret charity by carelessness, thinking that a desire for unity is synonymous with disregard for distinctively fundamental truths.

Church creed cannot make Christian character, nor,



if we think of it rightly, can even the holy word of God. The formation of Christian character is the prerogative of the Holy Ghost. Bible truths, teachings of Jesus, and apostolic exhortations and doctrines are all used, and the only things that are used, by the Holy Spirit in the education of the believer. "He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you." But while creed cannot make character it can shape it and regulate it, and so prevent it from excessively abnormal tendencies. The Christian who may think himself superior to all exterior helps and influences, believing himself to be under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit—by which he means the impulse of impressions and vague feelings, now moving him in this direction and now in that—is, notwithstanding his protestations, practically on the same plane with the half-infidel believer who excuses his barrenness of character with the couplet:

"For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,  
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

Christian character is not based on the maxims of philosophy, nor is it rooted in the soil of pagan morality, however pure, but in the doctrine of revelation. The soul that is nourished on the morality of paganism may attain to the grand stoicism of a Seneca, an Epictetus, or a Marcus Aurelius, but it never can

rise to the serene heights where the lowliest Christian stands. Among all the lofty names of paganism there is not one that can be called holy. The poor negro mother sitting in the darkness of her lonely cabin, soothing her sorrow with her faith and singing in sad tone,

“Nobody knows the sorrows I’ve seen,  
Nobody knows but Jesus,”

has more of God in her soul and is sublimer far in the character of her religion than any philosopher that ever gave luster to the moral schools of Greece or Rome or sat on the throne of the Cæsars.

There is a vast difference between the man who really believes that the eternal Son of God took flesh and dwelt among us and the man who trims that doctrine down to his own narrow comprehension; between the man who believes in the forgiveness of sin through Christ dying as “the just for the unjust” and the man who looks at the atonement as a moral example; between the man who believes in the regeneration and sanctification through the Holy Ghost and the man who doubts the personality of the Spirit, or who by the influence of false philosophy asserts that the immediate contact of the Holy Spirit with our spirits is wholly impossible. Both may be Christians, but one will be like a plant grown in a cellar, sickly and fruitless from the lack of the cheerful light of day; the

other shall be like "a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season," ever green; for its roots are nourished in the waters and its boughs warmed by the shining of the sun. Such is the connection between dogma and life that if the former is ignored the latter soon vanishes or becomes a sickly shadow of its former self. The Pietism of Germany considered dogma superfluous, but the Rationalism which increased soon drove the Church back to the study of the reasons for her faith.

Leaving the question of the relation between creed and conduct in the individual, we may notice briefly the same question with reference to a local church. A local church is composed of *faithful* people. If so, there must be something held in common by all having membership in that church. This must be true now as on the day of Pentecost. But the only things, religiously, that must be held in common are the fundamental doctrines of revelation. Should a number of men call themselves a church, but reject the doctrines, they would not be a church, but an ethical society. They could not expect the blessings of the Holy Ghost, nor could they hardly dare to ask for any thing necessary to the growth influence and saving power of a church.

Again, a scriptural creed is a connecting power not supplied, when lacking, by any thing else. In the pulpits of Christendom in almost every community there

are godly ministers of rare attractive qualities of mind and soul. Refined, intellectual, sociable, world-knowing, they wield immense power, and especially so when this cultured repose, fine intellectualism, and varied knowledge of men and things are heightened and adorned with the beauty of a pure life. It cannot be denied that many are drawn into the churches by this sweet magnetism of such a pastor, and rightly so—blessed is the man of God thus gifted and honored—but they stop short too often of the true union with that church. They join the pastor instead of joining the church, just as some others join the church, but fail to unite with Christ. A church thus founded and built up is nothing but a rope of sand. Men who are bound together in a grand undertaking by glorious principles which root themselves in the heart and life will maintain their endeavor when a leader falls, nor will they desert their cause when days of sadness and disaster come. A church bound by the doctrines of the Lord Jesus Christ will not be dependent upon the suavity of a pastor, but on the conviction that it is set for a witness of the truth. The continuity of a church is thus preserved; its life is not measured by the popularity of its minister, but by its devotion to principle, which, in such a case, can be no other than the faith once delivered to the saints. A church the opposite of this is a body without bones.

Had the early Christians rallied around an individual, rather than around the faith committed to them by the apostles, Christianity would have sunk under the fury of its persecutors; nor would a falling back on the belief of Christ's presence have saved it, any more than the belief of the Jews that God would suddenly come to his temple saved that glorious building when it was attacked by Titus at the siege of Jerusalem. Whether a church or an individual shall abide in the truth; whether either shall have a true Christian character; whether they shall continue or gradually pine away and finally vanish, depends on *what* they believe and *how* they believe.

## SECTION FOUR.

THE closing thoughts in the preceding section lead us to the final reason we shall touch upon for the use of and the *perpetuity of the Church*. That the perpetuity of Christ's Church has any intimate connection with the promulgation or existence of creed will probably shock many unless they look into the question earnestly. It will be assumed that the guarantee of the Church's continued existence is in the promise of Christ—that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church. This is freely granted. But are there no conditions back of this promise? Rejecting antinomianism in the religious or ethical life of the individual, shall we accept it in the life of any number of individuals forming an organic body, say, the Church? The apostle, writing to the Romans, says, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." This may be paralleled with the blessed promise of Christ to his Church. While nothing

in the universe can separate us from God we know that we can separate ourselves by sin; and while the gates of hell shall never be able to destroy the Church yet the Church may destroy itself by a decay of morals, of sound teaching, and by caring more for luxury and worldly power than for a pure gospel and a healthy ministry to the nations. History has given us, in the sense here meant, one fearful illustration of the self-destructive power of the Church in the tremendous evils which necessitated the Reformation.

To the Church as well as to the individual believer has Christ given his commandments. It is commanded to perpetuate the memory of his death in the sacrament of the holy communion till his coming again; and we do not see how it could be a Christian church if it abolished that sacrament. He also gave it commandment in its organic nature to go "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28. 19, 20). Now if obedience on the part of the believer to the commandments of Christ is the condition of union with him, of the presence of Christ in the soul, the same law must apply to the relation between Christ and his Church. The Church cannot violate its commission, cannot ignore the sacraments

of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper, or plunge into follies and vices, and substitute the teachings of philosophers and poets for the truths of the Gospel, and still maintain that Christ dwells in her and preserves her. The perpetuity of Christ's presence was not promised with that understanding; and the Church has no authority for putting Christ's signature to such a document. Christ dwells in the Church, and guides it, as he does the individual, not by extraordinary displays of omnipotence but by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit—who leads the Church into truth and makes it the witness of the truth already given—and by causing it to use the means of preservation purposely granted. Hence it must exercise a perpetual care for the faith once delivered, for it is only by doing this that it can preserve itself. The Church must know the truth, preserve the truth, and teach the truth. "Christ commissioned the Church to do this, and though it may do a thousand other needful and commanded duties, any prolonged incurable neglect to do this one thing will bring an eclipse over its powers and prospects which will be only less than its defeat and ruin. It may teach the morals of the Gospel, the benevolences and charities and humanities of the Gospel, or it may pour through multitudes of hearts the rich tide of refined and exalted emotions; it may kindle enthusiasm and build up characters of heroic and saintly mold; it



may be wise and gifted as regards all learning ; it may sing hymns and recite prayers and march in endless procession around the aisles and altars of sanctuaries ; it may be the good Samaritan pouring oil into the wounds and wine into the famished mouths of sin-cursed nations ; it may do all these things, and the doing of them may float it along the current for two, three, or four generations ; but, looking at the great cycle of the centuries between the first and second coming of its Lord, it cannot hope to travel through that in the greatness of its strength or in the full majesty of corporate prerogative, unless it teach truly, purely, diligently, universally the one *depositum* of faith which it received at the beginning.” \*

The chief heads of the doctrines which have been transmitted to the Church is the formulated belief or creed which it maintains as a guard against error, and as a guide to the believer as to what God has revealed and what his Son and the holy apostles command to be taught. “And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints ; for the work of the ministry ; for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the stature of the fullness of Christ ; that we hence-

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\* Amer. Ch. Rev. January, 1882. Rt. Rev. A. N. Littlejohn.

forth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Eph. 4. 11-14). The great creed of Christendom which lies back of all confessions of faith and declarations of councils is:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell, the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right-hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Back to this creed evangelical Christendom is hastening, and the day is coming when it will be the only creed of a united Christendom.

Such are some of the reasons why there should be a creed and why the Church persists in announcing its belief notwithstanding the onslaughts that have been made against it by friend and foe. It has been shown in the first part of this defense that there is nothing in Church creed more incredible than the belief of the

materialist—that creed does not make such demands upon the credulity of mankind as do the so-called facts of infidel science; that the truths of creed are verifiable; and that a creedless Christianity is not a commissioned religion. In the second part the reason for creed has been shown from the nature of the Church, in that it is the keeper and witness of the faith once delivered to the saints; that it is also a teaching body, *ecclesia docens*; that it is the preserver and promoter of Christian character; and that its perpetuity as a Christian Church depends upon its loyalty to the deposit of faith.

In closing these brief pages it may not be amiss to answer one or two general statements against the rigor of the Church in maintaining allegiance to creed. It is sometimes asserted that a dogmatic Church is intolerant and that creeds bind the reason. “A divine revelation,” it is said, “must necessarily be intolerant of contradiction; it must repudiate all improvement on itself, and view with disdain that arising from the progressive intellectual development of man.”\* The same objection is held against creed.

First. Truth is necessarily intolerant of error. This fact lies in the nature of things, and cannot be otherwise, so that the Church cannot be held responsible for what is grounded in the constitution of things. It would be just as rational to hold it responsible for the

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\* *History of the Conflict of Religion and Science.* Dr. J. W. Draper.

course of the winds. Science will admit of no heresies in her wide domain. Professor Virchow, in his celebrated address on Liberty of Science, affirmed with all the authority of an ecclesiastical dignitary, "We may not set down our hypothesis as a certainty, our problem as a dogma; that cannot be permitted." In Logic there is no tolerance of fallacies; nor in Government, nor in Society is there tolerance for what is inimical to the being and welfare of the State. Gallio, "who cared for none of these things," is not a type of the Church nor of science nor of good government, but of those who treat Bible truth as synonymous with "religious opinion." Intolerance must not be confounded with persecution. The former is the enemy of error, but the latter is the enemy of truth. Religion ceases to be divine when she lays reason aside and takes up the carnal weapons of man's weakness, and instead of making herself immortal, digs her own grave, for "he who lives by the sword shall perish by the sword." The Church has no authority to enforce the truth; her commission is to teach it; and when she goes beyond that and usurps the authority of the State she sins against God and man and is amenable to both.

Second. Concerning improvement of divine revelation. The same objection would be valid against the facts of science. Is gravitation a fact, and can there be any improvement in it? If a thing is true it is

true, and cannot be otherwise and be true. But, on the other hand, while it is true that "the faith once delivered to the saints" can neither be changed nor added to, this immobility of fundamental principles is not, and never has been, considered as antagonistic to the progressive character of dogma in the hearts of believers or to the intellectual conceptions of the doctrines revealed. This, however, is not the development advocated by Dr. Newman, for that ingenious theory is but a learned excuse for the papal assumption of adding to the faith, and so of creating new doctrines; it is the development clearly manifest in the progress of doctrine as seen in the New Testament. This development of doctrine can never change the fundamental truth, but, with the growth of the Christian consciousness, and the new light obtained through the labors of scholars in the many fields of biblical investigation and the advancement of science, the form, the terms in which the dogma is couched, may be, has been and will be, changed. Sin is a fact, as is also its universality; the incarnation, the atonement, the forgiveness of sins, future rewards and punishment—all these are fixed truths; but the understanding of them is not fixed. Neither the first century nor the sixteenth century established forever the philosophic explanations of those truths; nor can it be affirmed that a full and adequate explanation will ever be reached.

The Bible and the heart of man are as profound and contain as many mysteries as the material universe, and whatever is discovered in the one its counterpart will be found in the other.

Finally, as to the charge often carelessly made, that creed binds the reason and awakens antagonism to science, it may be said in reply that Christianity only has made an age of reason possible. It would be an easy task to run through the history of civilization and from every age since the downfall of the Roman Empire to produce irrefragable proof that Christianity has been the mightiest auxilliary of the ideas of civilization and progress,\* and that the best civilization of to-day is the child of Christianity.† The briefest summary only will be given, and this not by us, lest it should appear like special pleading. Theodore Parker will not by any be considered as overfriendly to a

\* "Le Christianism a été sur tous les points le puissant auxiliaire des idées de civilisation et de progrès."—Troplong, *De l'Influence du Christ. sur le Droit Civil*, p. 145; quoted by Farrar, *Witness of History to Christ*.

† "Wir sind unserer ganzen zeit aus dem Boden des Christenthums niedergestellt und von ihm ausgegangen."—Fichte, *ibid*. See also, Lecky, *Hist. of Rationalism*, vol. ii, 32, 261. Schmidt, *Sur la Société civile dans le Monde romain*. Bunson, *Gott in du Gesch.*, v. 3. Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois XIII.*, 21. Dowling's *Introduction to the Study of Ecclesiastical History*. 1838. Page 55: For the Preservation of Learning.

dogmatic Church; but from him we quote the following. Speaking of the Church, he wrote:

“Its influence is perhaps greater than even its friends maintain. It laid its hand on the poor and down-trodden; they were raised, fed, and comforted. It rejected with loathing from its coffers wealth gotten by extortion and crime. It touched the shackles of the slave, and the serf arose disenthralled, the brother of the free. . . . It sent missionaries to the East and the West, and carried the waters of baptism from the fountains of Nubia to the roving geysers of a northern isle. It limited the power of kings, gave religious education to the people, which no ancient constitution ever aimed to impart; kept on its hearth the smoldering embers of Greek and Roman thought. . . . It sanctified the babe newly born and welcome—watched over marriage with a jealous care, fostered good morals, helped even by its symbols to partake the divine nature, smoothed the pillow of disease and death, giving the soul wings, as it went, to welcome the death angel, and gently, calmly pass away. It assured innocent piety of its reward in heaven, told the weak and weary that divine wings would help him, if faithful. In the honors of canonization it promised the most lasting fame on earth—generations to come should call the good man a blessed saint, and his name never perish while the Christian year went round.

“Then, again, its character in theory was kindly and humane. It softened the asperity of secular wars, forbade them in its several seasons, established the fear of God and gave a chance for rage to abate. Against the king it espoused the cause of the people. Coming in the name of one ‘despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,’ of a man born in an ox’s crib, at his best estate not having where to lay his head; who died at the hangman’s hand, but who was at last seated at the right hand of God; and in his low estate was deemed God, in humiliation come down into the flesh to take its humblest form and show that he was no respecter of persons—that Christ did not fail to espouse the cause of the people with whom Christianity found its first adherents, its apostles and defenders. With somewhat in its worst days of the spirit of him who gave his life a ransom for many; with much of it really active in its best days, and its theory at all times, the Church stood up for long ages, the only bulwark of freedom, the last hope of man, struggling, but sinking, as the whirling waters of barbarism whirled him round and round. . . . Even in feudal times it knew no distinction of birth, all ‘were conceived in sin,’ shapen in iniquity alike the peasant and the peer. The distinction of birth and of station was apparent, not real. All were alike the children of God, who judged the heart and knew men’s person—



all heirs of heaven, for whom prophets and apostles had uplifted their voice; yes, for whom God had worn this weary wasting weed of flesh and died a culprit's death. . . . When northern barbarism swept over the ancient world—when temple and tower went to the ground, and the culture of old time, its letters, science, arts, were borne off before the flood—the Church stood up against the tide, shed oil on its wildest waves; cast the seed of truth on its waters, and as they gradually fell saw the germ swell up its shoots, which growing while men watch and while they sleep, after many days bears its hundred-fold a civilization better than the past, and institutions more beneficial and beautiful.” —*Discourse on Religion*, pp. 397–399.

On the other hand it has been asserted that much of the scientific culture and literary spirit of the present was derived from labors of Arabian scholars, who have never received the credit due them from their Christian successors. Dr. John W. Draper, in his *History of the Development of Civilization in Europe*, and in his one-sided work, *History of the Conflict of Religion and Science*, lays particular emphasis upon this and the anti-scientific attitude of the Church. It is true that the universities of Bagdad and Damascus, and those of Cordova and Seville, exerted immense influence in the Dark Ages, in the sciences of medicine and astronomy, and kept alive

the love of classical studies. But it should be remembered that the Arabian scholars obtained their knowledge of Greek literature from scholarly Christians of Syria, who translated the Greek authors into Arabic; and that, as Whewell, in his *History of the Inductive Sciences*, has shown, it was not until the sciences were taken in hand by Christian scholars that any great advance was made in this field of human knowledge. What discovery, what result of Arabic study can be compared to the mighty achievements of Newton or Kepler?

Further, it can be shown, we think, that the Church originated the idea of educational institutions in the modern sense. In ancient Athens the education under the Solonic law was disciplinary only. The schools of the philosophers were private conferences; and it was not until the period of Vespasian and Hadrian, that instruction of the people was seriously thought of, and then rhetoric and philosophy seem to be the principal studies taught, the elements of education being taught by private persons. At this same time ancient Rome obtained schools of rhetoric and political science, while, as in Athens, the lower studies were obtained as one could. With the accession of the Emperors Valentinian, Gratian, and Theodosius, a new era of education begins under Christian auspices. Then from the fall of the Roman Empire to the thirteenth century

the superior education was entirely controlled by the Church. Nor did the great universities rise through the munificence of the State. They originated in the cathedral and monastic schools which had been established under the patronage of Christian scholars and supported by incomes from church property. Passing from the Middle Ages to the Reformation period we find Luther and Melancthon the leaders of a new Church, the foremost advocates also of general education. In 1524 Luther urged the governments of Germany to establish schools, not only for boys, but also for girls, and in the same address pleaded for compulsory education. Melancthon aided in this work and traveled all over Thuringia, visiting churches and schools for the purpose of forming a plan of general education. In France there were at the close of the Reformation some twenty-four universities, independent of the State, governed for the most part by the chief officers of the Church. In Scotland it was the reformer John Knox who founded the parochial system, and who, like Luther, insisted upon the State educating the people. Of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and of Harvard and Yale, and of many other great institutions both in England and in this country, it is not necessary to speak. The relation of the Church to education can be summed up in two sentences from one of the greatest thinkers of modern

times, "That the clergy were the preservers of all letters and all culture, of the writings and even the traditions of literary antiquity, is too evident to have ever been disputed. But for these there would have been a complete break in Western Europe between the ancient and modern world." \*

It is true that oftentimes men of science have been persecuted by Church dignitaries, but it is also true that the worst persecutors and those who sustained these persecutions have been men of science. It was not the Church that harassed Harvey for his discovery of the circulation of the blood, nor Jenner for his theory of vaccination, but the physicians of London. To charge the Church with the crimes of some few leaders is about as just as if one should blame the students of science for the imprisonment of Galileo and Roger Bacon. Galileo had determined opponents among men of science whose enmity aided not a little the bigotry of inquisitors; and he had many staunch friends among the ecclesiastics, some of whom were in much authority. Roger Bacon also had many friends in the Church, one of whom afterward became pope under the title of Clement IV., and honored him by requesting from his pen a treatise upon the physical sciences. The Church has enough to answer for; but that she is chargeable with retarding the progress of intellect, or

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\* Mill, *Dissertation*, ii, 154.

that a Church insisting upon true allegiance to creed does in so doing repress free inquiry, cannot now be maintained. Even in that age of the Church's history, from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, which is usually referred to as belonging to that period of the Church which was most ignorant and most corrupt, *an age when ecclesiastical power was exercised with tremendous energy over the princes and peoples of Western Europe*—notwithstanding the crude statements of Buckle in his *History of Civilization in England*, to the effect that owing to the struggle between “feudality and the Church” men looked up to the nobles instead of the Church—in such an age more than forty universities were established: nineteen in France, six in Great Britain and Ireland, one in Belgium, two in Spain, and thirteen in Italy. And this farther may be said, that, notwithstanding all the alleged difficulties attending free inquiry, there is no department of human knowledge, whether we think of astronomy or geology, physiology or chemistry, mechanics or mathematics, that has not been enlarged by Christian scholarship. It were an invidious task to call the long roll of Christian scientists, navigators, and men of letters who made possible the intellectual progress of the present. But it will not be forgotten that it was an ecclesiastic, Copernicus, who discovered the revolutions of the planets around the sun; that it

was Gregory XIII. who reformed the calendar; that it was Christian men of faith who first circumnavigated the globe, discovered the American continent, doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and that in other fields of science the names of Kepler, Leibnitz, Euler, Cuvier, Des Cartes, Sir Isaac Newton, Agassiz, and Owen have not yet been dimmed by the shining of brighter luminaries. But if it be possible, and we believe it is, that grander intellects than these shall arise, and shall proclaim truths so profound and comprehensive that the entire stock of the world's present knowledge will be to them as a child's primer is to the literature of a nation, will the Church of God—which has founded the universities on this continent and in Europe, and has poured out its treasures of silver and gold for the extension of sound learning, and is now by her multiplied agencies making such things possible—will she be accounted an enemy to research and intellectual advancement? Where does Skepticism build her universities and colleges? In what countries beyond the circle of Christendom has the human intellect made any approach to the sublime achievements of Christian thought, or the anti-Christian thought which has been fostered by Christian influences in the schools of Christian England, France, Germany, and America? The Church, whatever baneful spells have been thrown around her by the ignorance of the world

and the corruption of her members, has still, more than any other power on earth, fostered science and encouraged literature and the fine arts. In the fine words of a Bampton lecturer, "Where will be found a succession of nobler intellects, of profounder thinkers, of more learned scholars, of more elevated moralists, of more subtle philosophers, of more successful toilers of the truth, than within the pale of the Church of Christ? Freedom of thought, largeness of affection, nobility of character, and political freedom, have all been nursed beneath the shadow of dogma. The sole exceptions to this fact are to be found in the corrupt periods of the Church, when she had departed from the teachings of the inspired Scriptures and substituted dogmas of man's making for dogmas of God's revealing. . . . But so long as the Church has been faithful to her trust, and has taught no dogmas but what are contained in or may be proved by Holy Writ, she has ever proved herself the nursing mother of free inquiry, religious liberty, and an advancing civilization." (Garbett's *Bampton Lecture*.) No honest doubter who has studied to any extent the history of civilization will imagine that the above is a rhetorical exaggeration of some real good arising indirectly from Christian teaching. It was the Church holding a dogmatic creed that, as Lecky says, "laid the very foundations of modern

civilization," \* and it is to the Church, said Mazzini,† that we are indebted for the modern doctrine of "the unity of the human family and of the equality and emancipation of souls."

The society of the future toward which our faces are turned as men who watch for the morning, or as the prophets of old looked for the coming of the King—a society which in all things that make for righteousness and peace and happiness among men shall transcend the present farther than we excel the semi-barbaric condition of feudal times—that society lies hid, like an oak in an acorn, within the leaves of the Bible, and as man becomes adapted to it by the gradual growth of his spiritual nature, Christian teaching, under the inspiration of the Spirit of life, development, and truth, will develop it as it has our age, and it will then be seen, as it is now only partially apprehended, that the only maker and saviour of society on this planet is the Church of the living God, holding with unchangeable firmness and love

THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

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\* *Hist. of Rational.*

† Letter to Ecumen. Council, *Fort. Rev.*, 1870.





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